

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) In an online messaging system supporting transmission of attachments, a method for automatically processing e-mail messages containing attachments, the method comprising:

specifying a preference for formatting attachments that accompany e-mail messages;

receiving, with a server, a particular e-mail message having a particular attachment;

detecting capabilities of an intended recipient's receiving device, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the intended recipient to retrieve the particular e-mail message, and the receiving device is one of a plurality of receiving devices known to the intended recipient;

determining a least common denominator format for the particular attachment, wherein the least common denominator format is a format that is compatible with the plurality of known receiving devices for said intended recipient;

responsive to detecting the intended recipient's receiving device and responsive to identifying the particular attachment as exceeding capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device, removing the particular attachment from the particular message, and inserting a link into the particular e-mail message, said link capable of referencing a reformatted attachment based on the determined least common denominator format ~~specified preferences and said link further includes transformation parameters that indicate how to transform the particular attachment to the reformatted~~

~~attachment and the transformation parameters are based on the capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device;~~

delivering the particular e-mail message to the intended recipient; and

in response to invocation of the link by the intended recipient, receiving a request for a copy of the reformatted attachment, wherein the request includes an identification of the reformatted attachment ~~and the transformation parameters.~~

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is associated with a particular user.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is associated with a particular device of a user.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said online messaging system comprises an e-mail messaging system.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said attachment includes media objects.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said media objects comprise selected ones of audio content, video content, images, and documents.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preference includes specifying that attachments which comprise images be formatted to a particular resolution.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preference includes specifying that attachments which comprise images be transformed from one file format to another.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of receiving a particular e-mail message includes:

receiving the particular e-mail message at an SMTP server.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said step of removing the particular attachment occurs at said SMTP server.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said step of removing the particular attachment occurs after processing by the SMTP server.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said particular e-mail message includes a MIME attachment.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said MIME attachment includes media objects.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said MIME attachment includes digital images.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said link comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) referencing said attachment that has been removed.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the copy of the particular attachment is automatically formatted when a request is received to retrieve the particular attachment.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein copies of attachments that are removed are stored in a network repository.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said formatting includes converting objects within an attachment from one format to another type of format.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said formatting includes decreasing the size of objects within an attachment.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein said decreasing the size of objects includes transforming the objects to a lower resolution.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said decreasing the size of objects includes transforming the objects from color to monochromatic.

23. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein formatted copies of objects within the particular attachment are stored in a network repository.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein said network repository is accessible by a Web browser for shared access among multiple participants.

25. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said particular attachment includes JPEG-formatted digital images.

26. (Currently Amended) In an online system, a method for providing digital images to target devices, the method comprising:

receiving, with a server, an e-mail message having one or more attached objects;

detecting capabilities of one of the target devices~~an intended recipient's receiving device~~, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the intended recipient of that target device to retrieve the e-mail message;

responsive to detecting the intended recipient's receiving device and responsive to identifying the objects as exceeding capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device, detaching said objects from said message, and that target device is one of a plurality of receiving devices known to the intended recipient;

determining a least common denominator format for each of the one or more attached objects, wherein the least common denominator format for that object is a format that is compatible with the plurality of known receiving devices for said intended recipient;

for each detached object, generating a request allowing retrieval of a transformed copy of the detached object, wherein the generated request includes an identification of includes an identification of the transformed copy of the detached object and transformation parameters that indicate how to transform that detached object to the transformed copy of the detached object, and wherein the transformation parameters are based on the capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device;

automatically transforming copies of each of said objects to a resolution fidelity that is more useful to said one of the target devices based on the determined least common denominator format for that detached object transformation parameters and

delivering the e-mail message to the one of the target devices, the e-mail message including said generated request for each detached object.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said transforming step includes converting copies of said objects to another type of format.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said transforming step includes decreasing the size of the copies of said objects.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of decreasing the size of said objects includes transforming the objects to a lower fidelity.

30. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein transformed copies of said objects are stored in a network repository.

31. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said objects comprise digital images.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said digital images are stored in JPEG format.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said request includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for referencing a transformed copy of a detached object.

34-45. (Canceled)

46. (Currently Amended) An e-mail system for providing e-mail having attachments, the system comprising:

an e-mail server for:

receiving a particular e-mail message having an attachment, the particular e-mail message being addressed to a recipient having a target device capable of receiving e-mail, the attachment including one or more objects, and

detecting capabilities of the target device, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the recipient to retrieve the e-mail message, and the target device is one of a plurality of receiving devices known to the recipient;

a media converter module to determine a least common denominator format for each of the one or more objects, wherein the least common denominator format for that object is a format that is compatible with the plurality of known receiving devices for said intended recipient;

a transformation module for transforming each of the objects of the attachment to a desired format, based on capabilities of the target device and the determined least common denominator object for that object;

an attachment processing module for replacing the attachment with at least one request responsive to detecting the target device and responsive to identifying the attachment as exceeding capabilities of the target device, wherein the at least one request allows retrieval of at least one of the transformed objects and the at least one request includes an identification of the at least one of the transformed objects ~~and transformation parameters that indicate how to transform the at least one of the transformed objects, and wherein the transformation parameters are based on the capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device;~~ and

a retrieval module allowing retrieval of the transformed objects, in response to invocation of at least one request.

47. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein the attachment of the particular e-mail message comprises a MIME attachment.

48. (Original) The system of claim 47, wherein the MIME attachment includes one or more digital images.

49. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein said e-mail server comprises an SMTP server.

50. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein said attachment processing module operates as a plug-in module to said e-mail server.

51. (Canceled)